



THE Clapper Rail

MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

SPEAKER SERIES

Free and Open to the public

Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon
Information: 415/789-0703

THURSDAY, MAY 10 7:30 PM

Kenya's Birds and Other Wildlife

With Preston Mutinda



Photo courtesy of Gerald Corsi

Black Crane

Preston Mutinda, owner of Preston's Birding and Wildlife Safaris, has been guiding custom birding, wildlife and photographic safaris in Kenya for over 30 years. One of only 13 professional guides to have achieved Gold in the Kenya rating system, he is known as being one of the best birders in Kenya and is knowledgeable about every other aspect of his country, from tribal customs, to history, to all the wildlife visitors might encounter on their trip..

Preston's presentation on Kenya's birds and other wildlife will be illustrated by the professional photography of

Gerald Corsi, retired oral surgeon at home in Santa Rosa who has traveled with Preston on several safaris. Jerry will also provide some insights into Kenya travel gathered over innumerable photographic safaris that began back in 1970. So, come admire many of Kenya's 1100+ species of birds: mousebirds, bee-eaters, rollers, go-away-birds, bustards, and hornbills—birds as varied as the tiny 4-inch Malachite kingfisher to the 8-foot Ostrich. The magnificent mammals such as the big cats, elephants, and herbivores will also be discussed.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

THURSDAY, JUNE 14 7:30 PM

Next month's speaker to be announced

MAS Annual Meeting, May 10

Join Marin Audubon for our Annual Meeting, which will take place at our regularly scheduled Speaker Series program on Thursday, May 10 at 8 pm (see adjacent Speaker Series column for information on the speaker). This is your opportunity as an MAS member to elect five directors who will each serve three-year terms beginning in June 2012.

The nominating committee has presented the following slate:

- **Cynthia Fatura**, who has experience as a teacher and in the human relations and technology fields, will be our Volunteer Coordinator;
- **Ed Nute**, a civil engineer who is an important part of our habitat acquisition and stewardship program, will be our Property Management Chair;
- **Helen Lindqvist**, who has served in several capacities for Marin Audubon, most recently as chair of the Speaker Series, would continue

to schedule interesting programs;

- **Phil Peterson** has been serving as our Conservation co-chair and will continue to do so; and
- **Barbara Salzman**, who has served in various capacities and is currently President.

We greatly appreciate these Directors who have agreed to serve for another term on Marin Audubon's Board. They are an important part of our organization and make possible the many activities and services we provide.

Nominations can also be made from the floor with permission of the nominee.

The agenda for the evening includes the election, a brief presentation of the highlights of Marin Audubon's activities during the past year, and then the speaker's presentation.

Participating in the election of Board of Directors is a right of members of all nonprofit membership organizations. We hope you will join us for this important event.

A Birder's Lament

By David Jensen

I have a couple of confessions to make. True Confession Number 1: I've never really cared for the National Audubon Society. I'm sorry, but it is true. You see, I have always had a love for birds, even as a boy. When I began to get serious about studying birds over 30 years ago, I joined the National Audubon Society to learn all I could. I faithfully read each copy of their magazine but soon realized they wanted to talk about habitat and conservation, not feather patterns and field notes. I didn't care about grasslands in the Dakotas or swamps in the Carolinas, so I threw their renewal notices in the trash and instead joined what might be called a birding club. I enjoyed birds and wanted to be the best birder I could be.

True Confession Number 2: I didn't miss

being part of Audubon for over 30 years. I was happy watching the birds in my back yard. I studied bird songs. I visited the birding hot-spots. I joined lots of Christmas Bird Counts. I slowly developed a set of skills and a modest life list. Birding was a personal pleasure for me, devoid of politics and conflict. Meanwhile, grasslands were converted to housing tracts, marshes turned to shopping malls, and the birds became scarcer and scarcer. Still, I enjoyed birds and simply wanted to be the best birder I could be.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All phone numbers are in the 415 area code unless otherwise noted. Questions? Please contact the Board member.

President	Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Vice President	Lowell Sykes 388-2821
Secretary	Mariah Baird 456-3355
Treasurer	Josephine Kreider 381-1910
Finance Chair	Greg Block 479-8254
Conservation	Phil Peterson 898-8400 Barbara Salzman 924-6057
Earthshare	Jude Stalker 668-1242
Field Trips	Vicky Van Meter 299-2514
Membership	Ruth Pratt 453-2989
Fundraising	Flinn Moore Rauck 892-7554
Programs	Helen Lindqvist 789-0703
Special Projects	Jude Stalker 668-1242
Nominating	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
Volunteer Coordinator	Cindy Fatura 815-8512
Property Management	Ed Nute 457-9241
Publicity	Martha Jarocki 461-3592
BAAC Reps	Lowell Sykes 388-2821 Barbara Salzman 924-6057

DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Meetings open to members. If you wish to attend please call 924-6057.

7:30 PM, First Tuesday of the month
Richardson Bay Audubon Center
376 Greenwood Beach Road
Tiburon, California 94920

MAS telephone: 721-4271 (for messages only)

Marin Audubon Society is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All memberships and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Web site: www.marinaudubon.org
Northern Calif. Bird Box: 681-7422
(Provided by Golden Gate AS)

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Marin Audubon Society welcomes gifts of funds, stock, or property, and bequests in general, or in honor or memory of someone. Gifts may be directed to any MAS project. Unspecified gifts of more than \$100 will be placed in the Endowment Fund for conservation, the protection of wildlife species and the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats. Since MAS is an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your donation goes to its projects. All gifts are tax-deductible and will be acknowledged in *The Clapper Rail*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society. Checks should be made out and mailed to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Barbara Salzman

I can't believe our fiscal year is almost over – just two more months – where did the time go?

Please take a minute to read the short article by David Jensen, beginning on page 1, reprinted from Mendocino Coast Audubon Society's newsletter. It is a moving piece expressing Mr. Jensen's long-time enjoyment and love of birds, and his relatively recent realization that good birders care about the future of the species they enjoy and act to protect them by speaking out and supporting efforts to protect the habitats on which they depend. Mr. Jensen refers readers to California Audubon's Web site, which provides information on projects of conservation concern. Of course Marin Audubon has a long history of preserving local habitats, and we offer opportunities and information that enable you to protect habitats right here in Marin. We invite you to join our Conservation Committee or follow up on suggested actions that come to you monthly in *The Clapper Rail*. Current critical projects coming up are the Marin County Road and Trails Plan (see article on page 4) and the Local Coastal Plan, both of which will influence what happens on many hundreds of acres of habitat that are essential

for the survival of many migratory and resident birds. The more voices there are speaking out to protect habitat, the more effective we can be.

Thank you to the Nominating Committee members, Martha Jarocki, Flinn Moore Rauck and Jude Stalker, for your work in putting together our slate of Directors. Our Board of Directors is limited to 15, but we have needs for volunteers to help with our habitat restoration projects, public outreach, mailings, and special projects, such as our upcoming Mother's Day Barbecue. Just e-mail marinaudubonvolunteers@gmail.com or call Cindy Fatura (415/815-8512), our volunteer coordinator, and she will match you up with tasks and time that suit you and your schedule. If you would like to join our Conservation Committee, call Phil Peterson.

We will not be having any Birdathon Teams this year because my Conservation Coots team partner is moving out of state.

We hope to see you for an enjoyable day at the Barbecue. Sign up early for the BBQ. How about joining us as volunteer to help set up, serve or clean up? This is a fund-raiser for Audubon Canyon Ranch and Marin Audubon Society.

A Birder's Lament

continued from page 1

True Confession Number 3: I may have learned how to identify many birds with only the slightest glimpse of feather, beat of wing or phrase of song, but I have not been a very good birder. Good birders truly care about the future of the species they enjoy and act to ensure that all birds are protected. Good birders speak out and support efforts to preserve habitats that are necessary for avian survival. Good birders not only enjoy the beauty of wild birds, but also repay them with time, talent and treasure. A selfish birder will never be the best birder possible.

So please join with me and all the best birders around. Help save what we have left so that there is something to leave for future generations. You don't need to write a big check. You don't need to quit your day job. You don't even need to put a bumper sticker on your car. Simply show your support and concern in any way possible. If you have Internet access, check the Issues and Actions page of the California Audubon Web site at www.audubon-ca.org. Write or call your elected officials – city, county, state, federal – and all of

them. Let them know that you care about birds and that you vote. Write letters to the local newspaper. Conservation doesn't just happen in the Arctic Refuge, it happens at home as well.

Each of us has different talents and interests, but we are all bound by a common interest in birds. I ask you to learn from the youthful mistakes of the person I was some thirty years ago. Support us in our efforts to preserve and protect the wild things we love. You will become the best birder possible.

David Jensen is president of the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society (www.mendocinocoast-audubon.org). This article is reprinted with his permission from their June 2011 newsletter, The Whistling Swan.

SAD GOOD-BY TO PETER DOUGLAS

We are saddened by the death of Peter Douglas who served for 20 years as executive officer of the California Coastal Commission. Under his leadership, the Commission worked steadfastly to protect the public's right to access the coast and helped protect agriculture and habitat along the coast. He will be missed.

MAS FIELD TRIPS

Open to the public

No need to sign up for one day trips, just join us. Bring lunch, field guide, and binoculars. For information, accessibility and weather check: Vicky Van Meter, 415/299-2514, vicky.vanmeter@gmail.com

LAS GALLINAS STORAGE PONDS

SAN RAFAEL

Thursday, May 3, 2012

8:30 AM to 12 noon

With Susan Kelly

All are welcome to join Susan and friends on the first Thursday of each month for a walk around the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds near McInnis Park. There is always something interesting to see and this walk is great for all levels of birders. Spring migrants will be moving through in May. Hawks are frequent and we see the graceful Northern Harrier on virtually every trip. Over 100 bird species have been reported as likely to be seen over the course of a year.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy. 101 take the Smith Ranch Road exit; go east toward the McInnis Park entrance. Turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks and go to the end of the road to the Las Gallinas Storage Ponds parking lot. Meet the group by the bridge just past the parking lot. The walk starts at 8:30 AM but late arrivals should easily be able to find the group.

DEER ISLAND

NOVATO

Thursday, May 17, 2012

8 AM to 12 noon

With David Herlocker

Deer Island is no longer a true island, but it is almost surrounded by seasonal wetlands. The insects and rodents that thrive here support an incredible diversity of breeding birds, from raptors to swifts. We will take a leisurely stroll up to and along the ridge where aerial feeders swoop close overhead and the abundant mature trees are filled with cavity nests. After that we will descend to a level trail that provides views of marsh and pond habitats on one side and intermittent forest edge habitat over the other shoulder. It will be about a 2 mile walk. Meet at the Deer Island Trailhead in Novato.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy. 101 take the Atherton Avenue/San Marin Drive exit, go east on Atherton Avenue, turn right at Olive Avenue, and turn left at Deer Island Lane (305 Deer Island Lane).

BIG ROCK/LOMA ALTA

Sunday, May 27, 2012

9 AM – 1 PM

(8:30 AM at the Smith Ranch Road Park and Ride lot if you are carpooling)

With Dave Herrema, Susan Kelly and Len Blumin

The north slope of Loma Alta above Lucas Valley Road is high and dry, with great vistas. This is not the place for a lot of species, but we should see some birds you may have not seen before, such as Grasshopper, Rufus-crowned and Lark Sparrows; Horned Larks; and Lazuli Buntings. Western Meadowlarks should provide the melody. This is also a great place for raptors. All are welcome to join us for a leisurely walk of about a mile on a wide, graded road. Some of this is uphill. Please bring plenty of water.

DIRECTIONS: Big Rock Trailhead is about 5 miles west of Hwy. 101 on Lucas Valley Road. Parking is limited at the trailhead so we will meet for carpooling in the Park and Ride lot at the Smith Ranch Road/Lucas Valley exit at 8:30 AM. The Park and Ride is just east of Hwy. 101 on Smith Ranch Road.

ALCATRAZ

SAN FRANCISCO

Tuesday, June 12, 2012

Boat leaves at 10 AM

Led by Alcatraz docents

Join us for a tour of the birds of Alcatraz. In early summer the "Rock" is an important breeding area for Western Gull, Cormorants, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Snowy Egret and other species. We will leave on the 10 AM boat from Pier 33 in San Francisco and be met by the island docents for a 1-2 hour tour to see the birds and learn about the interesting history and issues of the area. After the tour, participants can stay to tour the rest of the island and return on any boat they wish. Cost is \$20 per person for the ferry. The trip will be limited to 25. The Alcatraz paths and steps are steep and uneven in places. Please send a check with the name, e-mail address, and contact phone number of each participant to Marin Audubon, Box 599, Mill Valley, CA, 94942-0599. Please write "Alcatraz" on the envelope and check. Additional information will be sent before the trip.

MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC BIRDING

WEEKEND

Saturday-Sunday, October 6-7

With Terry Colborn

Terry Colborn is leading a weekend birding trip for us to the Monterey Bay area, October 6-7, 2012, during the peak of fall migration. The weekend will feature a pelagic trip on Saturday with Monterey Seabirding (www.montereyseabirding.com), and land birding on Sunday.

The pelagic trip, \$95/person, is limited to 25 participants. Sign-ups will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis beginning March 1. This trip will fill up very quickly. Make your check payable to Terry Colborn and mail to: 1714 Magnolia Place, Davis, CA 95618. Include each participant's full name, address, cell phone number and e-mail. Your payment in full is your reservation. More details about the trip can be found at www.marinaudubon.org. For questions, contact Terry at tlogdc@aol.com, or by phone: 916/705-8991.

CONSERVATION

Marin Audubon Conservation Committee reviews critical issues related to wildlife habitats and comments to cities, agencies, and other jurisdictions. To attend, phone Barbara Salzman at 415/924-6057.

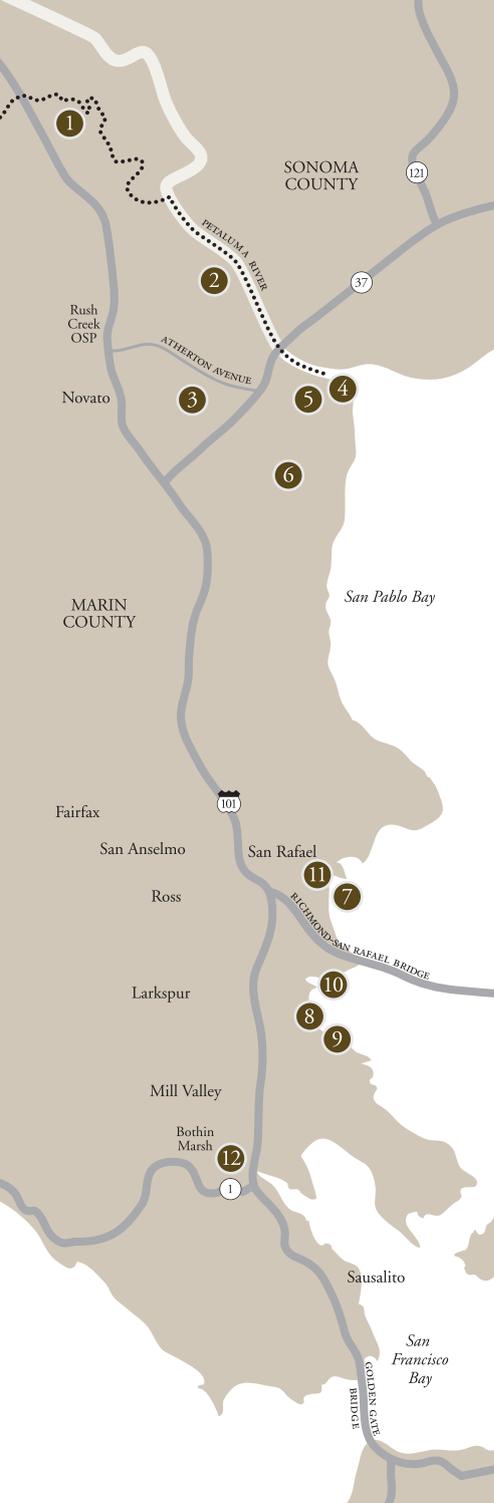


Photo courtesy of Jules Evans

Undesignated trail at Bahia

MARIN COUNTY ROAD AND TRAILS UPDATE

In late March, the Marin County Open Space District (OSD) staff held the last in a series of public workshops on the Road and Trails Plan. Staff presented vegetation maps, inventories of trail conditions and visitor uses, as well as draft policies they will use to finalize the Road and Trails Management Plan.

An initial inventory of roads and trails found more than 50 miles of “undesignated” trails (unauthorized trails which OSD calls undesignated trails) that were created by bicyclists, walkers, or horseback riders going off approved trails. These unauthorized trails degrade vegetation and wildlife habitat. While some beneficial policies are proposed, it is not clear how the plan will actually protect and enhance these natural resources. The focus is almost entirely on enhancing the experience of visitors by providing trails.

MCOSD staff has divided the open space lands into zones based on vegetative characteristics and public use:

Zone 1, “Immersed in Nature,” consists of intact high quality resource areas, with minimal disturbance and the highest level of resource protection. Plan policies emphasize decommissioning roads and trails and adding use restrictions. Construction of new roads and trails for connectivity may occur only to enhance environmental protection. Existing roads and trails would be rerouted away from streams. Penalties will increase for code violations and dogs must be leashed.

Zone 2, “Connect to Nature”, consists of moderately degraded resources which would receive moderate to high protection and

restoration. Modifying roads and trails to reduce maintenance and redundancy and to improve trail conditions would be emphasized. Roads and trails in streams and at-grade stream crossings could remain if no other location is available. Decommissioning of undesignated trails and roads could occur in zones 1 or 2.

Zone 3, “Actively Managed,” consists of moderately degraded resources that would be protected and restored as in Zone 2. Policies would be identical to Zone 2 except that, to offset new routes, decommissioning of undesignated roads and trails could be in zones 1, 2 or 3.

Zone 4, “High Use,” lands are near developed areas and are well-used. Multiple uses would be allowed with the least restrictions of all zones. The emphasis would be on improving visitor services and activities that improve resource protection. Increased ranger presence, dog waste stations, and parking are given as examples. If no other options are available to maintain or establish a trail connection, new intrusions into stream setbacks would be permitted.

Despite the presence of native wildlife including endangered species on county open space lands, the draft policies make no mention of wildlife. When MAS raised this issue at the workshop, the reply was that the plan would comply with existing laws, and that wildlife would be considered in the context of vegetative habitat. This is not sufficient. The MCOSD should consider needs of native wildlife populations and habitats as distinct but related to vegetation.

A major concern is that there could be substantially more designated trails (trail

MARIN AUDUBON PROPERTIES

1. Petaluma Marsh	180 acres
2. Bahia	60 acres
3. Simmons Slough	162 acres
4. Norton Avenue Pond	4 parcels
5. Black Point Parcels	2 parcels
6. Arroyo San Jose	2 parcels
7. Tidelands at Murphy's Rock	34 acres
8. Corte Madera Marsh	1.8 acres
9. Triangle Marsh	31 acres
10. San Clemente Creek	4.34 acres
11. Tiscornia Marsh	20 acres
12. Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio	2 acres

authorized by OSD) because the proposed policies would allow the building of new trails to be offset by removing undesignated trails. So instead of reducing the number of trails, we could end up with as many as 50 more miles of designated trails. This is unacceptable. If a new trail is built, then an existing designated trail should be removed. If there is interest in retaining undesignated trails because they are evaluated as being more environmentally sensitive than an existing designated trail, then a designated trail should be removed.

There are already at least 180 miles of designated trails on MCOSD lands. In addition, there are hundreds of miles of trails and roads on lands managed by the Marin Municipal Water District, GGNRA, State Parks and Point Reyes National Seashore. Privately owned open space, including properties owned by MAS, also offer public access. We don't need any more trails.

The following are highlights of policies MSOSD is considering. Beneficial policies that are proposed:

- All users (walkers, bikers or horseback riders) must stay on designated trails and roads, except while watering or resting animals. No off-road or off-trail use will be permitted.
- A "zero tolerance" policy for unauthorized trail construction and unauthorized reopening of decommissioned trails would be enacted with penalties for violators.
- Certain trail uses may be prohibited or increased restrictions may be applied to enhance safety, minimize conflicts or protect resources, and the MCOSD will strive to prevent unintentional displacement of some trail users by other trail users.

The following proposed policies may be beneficial in some respects but could lead to increased active uses, more trails and higher impacts:

- Additional opportunities for mountain biking at low to moderate speeds would be provided but no racing or high-speed downhill runs would be allowed. This would mean more bikes on more trails.
- MCOSD would strive to increase road and trail connectivity and loops for mountain bike use and may consider one-way trails, uphill, and single-use trails.

How you can help: A Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) will be prepared on the Road and Trails Management Plan. There will be opportunities for the public to comment on the Draft PEIR, on the final PEIR, before the Parks Commission, and,

ultimately, before the Supervisors. Comments recommending that wildlife and habitat be addressed in the PEIR and be included in the Plan should be sent to: Elise Holland, Marin County Parks, 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903.

Further environmental review would be conducted for work on specific trails.

GRADY RANCH UPDATE

The withdrawal of George Lucas's Grady Ranch development is being blamed on the neighbors and, by some, on regulatory agencies. Six creek scientists reviewed or consulted on the Grady Ranch Creek restoration plan and submitted coordinated comments from NOAA Fisheries, the California Department of Fish and Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. These comments were apparently presented to the county just before the Supervisor's meeting, although they had been submitted to the applicant's consultant at least four months earlier.

The comments are clear that the agencies do not consider the proposed restoration plan for Miller Creek and its tributaries to be a restoration at all. They consider the design a threat to this steelhead creek. The agencies indicated, in essence, that they could not approve the proposed creek "restoration", and urged a restoration reflecting historical conditions – a "low impact" alternative instead of filling the creek with 68,000 cubic yards of soil. Had the LucasFilm team distributed the agency recommendations (the memo is dated 12/11/11) to the county and begun to act on them promptly, it is likely they could be well on their way to obtaining agency permits. There is a design the agencies would be able to approve. LucasFilm clearly wants to do their own design, not one that comes from agency creek experts.

On April 20 LucasFilm sent a letter to the regulatory agencies withdrawing their development plan application and announcing their intent to abandon plans to build a digital production studio at Grady Ranch. The letter refers to the creek plan as a "restoration" noting the amount of money they have spent or planned to spend (between \$50 and \$70 million is quoted) and does not acknowledge the issues and recommendations offered by the agency experts.

Concerns about the LucasFilm consultant's plan were raised many times by MAS, other environmental organizations and members of the public during the environmental review for the project. Unfortunately, these concerns were ignored.

Hudeman Slough with Murray Berner

By Dave Herrema

It was cold, but dry, after several days of heavy rain when eight of us gathered at Hudeman Slough in southeastern Sonoma County. We were fortunate to have Murray as our guide; he is a trip leader for Napa-Solano Audubon and primary author of the Napa Breeding Bird Atlas. We counted 70 species – lots of waterfowl,



Walter Siegmund

Lincoln's Sparrow

shorebirds and gulls. I've never seen so many **Lincoln's Sparrow**. We spent time scoping **Cinnamon**, **Green-winged** and **Blue-winged Teal**; the trick is telling the hens apart (some serious bird discussions here). We welcomed Peter, a student at Marin Catholic High School, who was working on a migratory bird project. I can't emphasize enough how all skill levels, from none to advanced, are welcomed on MAS field trips.

BIRDS ON THE RADIO/COMPUTER

Laura Erickson's "For the Birds" podcasts: <http://lauraerickson.com/Radio/Podcasts/FTB.html>

eBIRD.ORG

It's for travelers, too. Check the eBird records to see where to find your target birds when you are going out of town or even out of the country. Of course, submit your observations, too.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Ample recent rain and warmer weather produced dramatic growth that was obvious in just two weeks. The radish patches at Triangle and Bahia are much reduced from previous years. Weed pulling is much easier now and with enough hands and repeated scrutiny some of the patches will practically disappear. They can be beaten! Join us on a work day. You would make a difference.

We have the tools, gloves and snacks. We generally work until about 1 PM, but even an hour is valuable help. Everyone is welcome. Steady rain cancels.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Triangle Marsh, Corte Madera:

First Saturdays: May 5, June 2

Meet at 10 AM on Paradise Drive directly across from the main Ring Mountain trailhead.

Bahia, Novato:

Second Saturday: May 12

Thursdays, May 10, 24

Meet at 10 AM at the end of Topaz Drive near Bolero Court and the tennis courts.

If you would like to help, please contact Bob Hinz at rbthnz@comcast.net or 415/383-8688.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Heidi Allgaier, Janice A. Austin, Robert Belichick, G. Daniel Bowling, Alf & Ann Brandin, Jay Brooks, Barbara Burke, Natalie Cherry, Richard J. Havel, Donna Kogan, S. Kraeger, Carl Lewis, Karen Lovdahl, Jennifer L. Matkin, Anne McClain, Georgia McDaniel, Stephen McKenna, Alexia Moore, Kathleen A. Norwood, Richard L. Ocheltree, Judith Page, Richard Palmeri, Thomas Parenti, Dorothy Potter, Bob Pritchard, Sybil Reynolds, Kathleen Shepard, Russell Symon, Richard D. Taplitz, Barbara Tarasoff, Robert Timineri, Samantha Tuttle, Chuck Vadalabene

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

Elise & Francis Ardourel, Judy Bloch & H. Spencer, Alf & Ann Brandin (In memory of F. Conger Fawcett), Daniel & Lee Drake, Barbeau & Alison Engh, Lorraine Grace, John Harrington & Ida Baugh, Alice Jackson, Richard Jennings, Mary Lynn Kunkel, Mark Lindberg, Mike Moser, Terri Nevins, Carol Peltz, Alison Quoyeser, Robert & Susan Rosenberg, Judith Wickley (In memory of Woody)

THANKS TO OUR MAS VOLUNTEERS:

Debbie Ablin, Cristine Albert, Bob Bundy, Melissa Gibson, Bianca Hawkins, Bob Hinz, The Marin School students and teachers, Dee McCarthy, Prem McMurdo, Alison Owings, Flinn, Demetrius & Genna Rauck, James & William Robertson, Jude Stalker, Idalia Sullivan, Lowell Sykes, Kiara Wade

MESSAGE TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

MAS welcomes all volunteers – even if you can only stay for a limited time or must do less-strenuous work. Our Saturday volunteer groups move around depending on what work needs to be done and where, particularly at Bahia.

We urge you to call ahead so that we can tell you where we'll be and how to find us. Sometimes we'll be working out of sight from the road. If we know you're coming and you are late, we can be on the look-out for you. We'll also be placing sandwich boards at the site to let you know where our volunteers are working. We apologize to anyone who has come to volunteer and has not been able to find us! Call Bob Hinz at 415/383-8688.

ACTIVITIES UPDATE

With the help of donors, this month we were able to hire the Conservation Corps North Bay to remove the highly invasive French broom from our Olive property. We were also pleased

to welcome student volunteers from the Marin School in Sausalito who removed invasive Harding grass and French broom from our Triangle Marsh property. On the second Saturday in March, 12 volunteers who came through the Center for Volunteer and Non-profit Leadership worked for 39 volunteer-hours planting creeping wild rye at Bahia.

We are thrilled with the rains, even though late, and hope they will help the plants we planted in December make it through the summer. The saturated soils make it much easier to pull broom. Pulling broom is a more effective way to eliminate it. Cutting simply makes the root structure more complex and difficult to remove later.

We are now in the process of choosing species and ordering plants to be planted on our various properties for next year. We are also working on permits for wetland enhancement on our 145-acre property at Simmons Slough, which we hope to implement this fall.

APRIL 3 FIELD TRIP

Silently Seeking Songbirds: Practicing the Art of Listening

By Susan Kelly

Fifteen participants and trip leaders Marian Porter and Susan Kelly spent the morning walking the trails of Mt. Burdell, silently listening for songbirds. Only five minutes into the walk, we heard the distinctive buzzy calls of **Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers** and had great looks at a pair of them. **Bewick's Wrens, House Wrens, and Warbling Vireos** seemed to be everywhere. An odd raptor call turned out to be from a **Cooper's Hawk**, and two flew over us. The mountain was in stunning green garb, accessorized with early wildflowers, newts (watch your step!), and, of course, the singing

birds. The **Lark Sparrows** really stood out, literally, being very much in view and giving close-up views of their gorgeous heads. We also had great looks at **Western Bluebirds, a Lark Sparrow, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, and Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, and Townsend's Warblers**. Our total species count for the day was 51.



Photo courtesy of Len Blumkin

Lark Sparrow

RESERVE TODAY

MAS/ACR Mother's Day Barbecue

Sunday, May 13, 2012

Gates open: 11 am; Lunch: 12 noon – 2 pm

Volunteer Canyon

4800 Highway 1, Stinson Beach

We sold out last year so don't wait. Reserve today! This is the only time Volunteer Canyon is open to the public. For more information call Mary Anne at 415/453-2216.

Hope to see you there!

Reserve your spot by sending a check payable to *Marin Audubon Society* to:

Mary Anne Cowperthwaite
141 Oak Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960

\$25 for adults, \$12 for kids 12 and under
Indicate your choice of quiche or chicken for each person for whom you are paying.

Remember to bring utensils, cups, bowls and plates. Non-disposable preferred.

MARIN BIRDLOG – MARCH 2012

By Rich Stallcup



Glenn Tepke, pbase.com/gepke

Wilson's Warbler

Since there were no interesting Marin bird reports for March on either North Bay Birds or the Northern California Bird Box, I will take it from here and talk about what was or what should have been.

Just over 150 **Red-throated Loons** counted on southeast Richardson's Bay 3/22 (KW, RS) seemed huge for a small area inside San Francisco Bay.

Hooded Mergansers were slightly out of place: one at Drake's Pond 3/21 (NB) on the O.P. where they are very rare and another 3/25 (HC) for a first record at the well-worked Teal Pond on Tomales Point.

Also on 3/25, just before the "H" Ranch on Tomales Point, a male *Falco columbarius richardsonii* was more than usually confiding on a roadside fencepost (RS, HC).

Fc. richardsonii is the pale, prairie race of Merlin and

the adult males are lightly streaked ventrally and sky-blue dorsally. Male prairie Merlins are called "Blue Jacks" by some hawk monitoring folk but then some of them have made-up names or contractions of official bird names for everything.

Prairie Merlin is the rarest of the three regular Merlin races wintering in California.

The first **Wilson's Warblers** were singing on their territories by the middle of March with "**Pacific Slope**" Flycatchers and **Warbling Vireos** not far behind, then **Brown Headed Cowbirds** right behind the vireos!

Hooded Orioles will show up in the first week of April, then Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings and the rest, with Olive-sided Flycatchers in the third week and Western Wood Pewees on the 28th.

The last week of April is the best period for doing big days, big sats, big bike days, big hours or big walks because all the summer nesters are present (and singing) and individuals of most winter species still linger.

On April 17, 1976, four of us did a big walk from Bear Valley to Inverness Park and over the ridge, down Muddy Hollow, then out Limantour on the estero side and back on the ocean side (13 miles from 0415 to 1815). Our total of 151 species is still the Marin big day on foot record. Luckily we had the foresight to leave a car at Limantour.



Photo: Raj Booral/CCSA

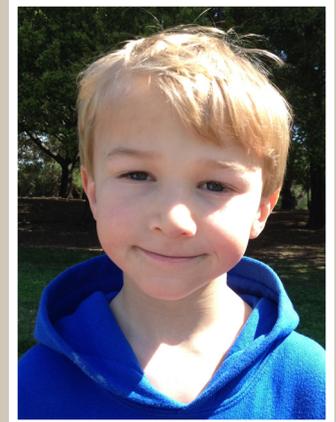
Prairie Merlin

OBSERVERS: Heather Cameron, Jules Evens, Native Birds Group, O.P. – outer Point Reyes, PRBO Conservation Science, Rich Stallcup, Kerry Wilcox

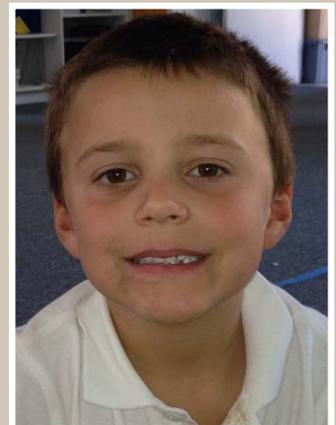
Junior Bird Watchers

By Wendy Dreskin

Junior Bird Watchers is an in-school program designed to teach elementary school children to identify birds in their neighborhoods. The program was developed by National Audubon Society (NAS). When NAS discontinued the program, Marin Audubon assumed sponsorship and Wendy Dreskin continues as the instructor, conducting the program in classrooms at several elementary schools. If you would like more information, please visit "Junior Birdwatchers" under the "Birds" tab on our Web site at marinaudubon.org, or contact Wendy Dreskin at 415/457-3949.



Aaron Newhard is a kindergarten student at Bacich. Aaron would really like to see a male House Finch.



Hudson Lofrano is a kindergartner at St. Rita School. His favorite bird is the Common Raven.



THE Clapper Rail

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Novato
With David Herlocker
- June 12 **Field Trip:** Birds of Alcatraz
- June 19 **Field Trip:** Breeding Birds
of Point Reyes
With David Herlocker

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The success of Marin Audubon Society's (MAS) work depends greatly on its chapter supporting members. We work collaboratively with the National Audubon Society (NAS) on issues of mutual concern, but very little of our funding comes from NAS. MAS relies on local support for our habitat protection efforts, conservation advocacy, birding field trips, educational speakers series, and publication of *The Clapper Rail*, which you will receive as a MAS member. To better ensure we can continue our programs on the local level, MAS offers a separate chapter membership. Your membership in MAS will help us protect local habitats, resident and migratory birds and provide you with educational and enjoyable programs as well.

If you are not already a chapter supporting member, we urge you to join MAS and urge your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

You can also join or make a donation on our Web site using your credit card or PayPal. Please go to www.marinaudubon.org.

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A National Audubon Society Membership is a joint membership with National and the chapter. With this joint membership, you will receive our newsletter and other chapter benefits, however, MAS receives no portion of your National Audubon Membership dues. We receive a fixed amount based on our 2001 membership. We will receive, however, a portion of any new memberships that are generated by MAS, the local chapter. So we request that you send all checks for new National memberships to: Marin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 599, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

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